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## HANDOUT 7-1

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### ***STEVEN'S PROBLEM***

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**S**teven likes to drink, but he doesn't think it's a problem. He's got a regular job with a landscaping company and only occasionally calls in sick because he's hung over. He's recently started dating Sherry, who works in the company office. She parties with him, but doesn't drink herself. And lately, he's felt like she's annoyed with him when he's having more than a couple of drinks.

One morning, after he's partied at night with his buddies, he calls in sick. His boss isn't there, and Sherry's the one who takes the call. When he says he's got the flu, she snorts and says "Oh yeah — that's probably going around with all the guys you partied with last night." Steve feels his stomach knot up. "Just pass on the message, will you?" He says. Sherry says she will, but then adds: "Listen, Steve — you've got a drinking problem. That's OK — it's your problem. But don't get me involved again by asking me to lie for you." Steven makes believe he hasn't heard. But when he hangs up the phone, he feels even worse than he usually does when he's hung over. He's sweating.

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## **HANDOUT 7-2**

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### ***PROBLEM-SOLVING GUIDELINES***

- 1. Recognize When There's a Problem Occurring, or When One Is about to Develop:**
  - Know the triggers that signal a problem
  - Monitor internal and external triggers
  
- 2. Use Your Thinking Skills to Find New Ways to Look at the Situation**
  - Explore the T-A-Cs to each Situation (e.g., Session 6: Joe P.O. is looking for him)
  - Recognize how Thinking and Emotions influence your Actions
  - Distinguish between position and motive
    - The position is what someone SAYS they want
    - The motive is what someone REALLY wants. Sometimes it is the same as their position, but often it is not
    - If you think there is a difference between the two — ask questions to clarify
    - It is more important to satisfy someone's motive than their position.
  
- 3. Identify the Problem by Putting it into Words**
  - Develop a clear ACTION statement of the problem, which includes your goal: "How can I ...?"
  
- 4. Brainstorm Alternatives**
  - Think of as many alternatives as possible
  - Don't reject any possibilities at this point — sometimes the best ideas seem far-out at first
  
- 5. Evaluate Your Alternatives, Pick the Best Solution**
  - Look at the pros and cons for each
  - Consider possible consequences — short and long term
  
- 6. Implement Your Solution and Evaluate how Effective it Was**

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## **HANDOUT 7-3**

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### **GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK**

**W**e have things to contribute — things we need to communicate to others. We want to ensure that others are open to what we have to say. At the same time, we can learn much from others. They can often evaluate our thinking and behavior more objectively than we can. Our emotions and feelings may interfere with our ability to objectively evaluate ourselves. Therefore, feedback from others can be a valuable source of information to us in solving our problems and evaluating our behavior.

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### **GUIDELINES FOR GIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK**

#### **1. Focus First on the Positive — People Tune out Overly Critical Feedback**

- Identify and discuss positive things first. People need to know what they did RIGHT, as much as they need to know what needs improvement. In addition, people are generally more open to critical feedback if they understand it to be only a PART of the picture — not the whole picture.
- Example: Brian, I really liked the way you maintained your cool in that disagreement with your probation officer in the role-play. *(positive feedback first)*. I think you might have made your point better, however, if you hadn't gotten personal and told him he was a jerk... *(provide a recommendation, or describe what wasn't handled so well)*.

#### **2. Focus on the Person's Behavior — Don't Make Judgments about their Personalities**

- Ineffective: Brian, you are a real wimp. You should...
- Effective: Brian, when your probation officer refused your request, you might have said... *(provide an alternative or describe what went wrong)*.



### **3. Suggest — Don't Dictate or Instruct**

Dictating or instructing puts people on the defensive. Advice is a suggestion that you make, and it recognizes that the other person has the right to decide what to do with your advice.

- Use phrases like "I think ..." or "Maybe you could try..." Or "This has worked for me" to show that it is a suggestion.
- Avoid phrases like "You should..." or "You have to..."

### **4. Evaluate Your Motives**

- Remember — giving feedback is supposed to help someone else
- It is NOT an opportunity to show off or grandstand.

## **GUIDELINES FOR RECEIVING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK**

### **1. Try to Be Open and Receptive**

If you concentrate on hearing, rather than defending, you may find the other person has some good ideas to share with you.

### **2. Clarification**

If you are unclear about the feedback, ask the person providing it to be more specific and provide examples.

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## HANDOUT 7-4

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### **CARL WATTS**

**C**arl Watts is 35 years old, and operates a small construction company. He likes his crews to get along together, and so over the years, he's encouraged them to party together. At least twice a week, he takes them out for drinks after work, and that sometimes turns into a late-hours party.

Over the course of the last year, Carl's noticed that one of his crew chiefs, Arny Wilcox, has been drinking heavily whenever they go out. Arny gets aggressive with other crew members when he's had too much, and a few of them have complained to Carl about it. Carl also noticed that Arny and a couple of the other crew members who drink heavily don't work as well after a night out as they otherwise do.

Carl lives with Angie, who loves to party. She is a moderate to heavy drinker, who gets bored sitting at home. She and her girlfriends usually join Carl and the crew when they party. Angie gets into the music and the action and flirts with members of Carl's crew. Lately, he's noticed that Arny is most likely to get aggressive when Angie is flirting. The whole scene is starting to make Carl uncomfortable.

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## HANDOUT 7-5

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### ***INSTRUCTIONS***

- 1.** Develop a brief role-play that shows the problem you've been assigned actually developing.
- 2.** Apply the problem-solving guidelines to the problem you've shown developing in your role-play. Make your notes detailed enough so that you'll be able to brief others on them.
- 3.** Develop two more role-plays showing Carl handling the problem.
  - In one role-play, show Carl successfully following through on his problem-solving, and successfully using some of the guidelines on giving and receiving feedback.
  - In the other role-play, Carl should fail to apply either (or both) of the guidelines we have looked at today.
- 4.** Be prepared to present your role-plays, and brief the other groups on the problem-solving process you followed for Carl Watts.

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## **WORKSHEET 7-6**

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### ***PERSONAL PROBLEM SOLVING***

- 1.** Identify a problem involving others that you have, or will have soon. Explain how you'll use the problem-solving model to deal with the problem.

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- 2.** Describe three situations involving others that present a risk to your substance use goals. Identify specific skills you could use in each situation.

PROBLEM	SKILLS I CAN USE